

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3676

S E C R E T SAIGON 11375

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS MARR VS

SUBJECT: STATUS OF MR 2 ULTIMATUM TO NVA/ VC

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM NHA TRANG JUNE 24

REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE NHA TRANG 0636

REF: NHA TRANG 0635

1. THANKS TO CANDEL COOPERATION, KONTUM POLOFF HAS NOW SEEN ACTUAL TEXT OF MAJ. GEN. TOAN' S ULTIMATUM TO THE PRG WHICH KONTUM ICCS TEAM WAS ASKED, ON JUNE 23, TO DELIVER TO PRG.

2. THE WRITTEN TEXT SUBMITTED TO ICCS/ KONTUM BY GVN TPJMT ELEMENT IS IN TWO PARTS AND SAYS IN EFFECT: (A) IF NVA/ VC DO NOT WITHDRAW FROM TRUNG NGHIA AND POLEI KRONG VILLAGES BY 0800 H ON JUNE 28, RVNAF WILL MOUNT " STRONG REACTION" (NOT FURTHER SPECIFIED); AND (B) NVA/ VC SHELLING OR OTHER HOSTILE ACTION DIRECTED AGAINST KONTUM CITY OR ITS IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS WILL RESULT IN VNAF BOMBING OF BEN HET AND PHUNG HOANG 2 (THE AIRFIELD NEAR DAK TO).

3. THIS TEXT ENABLES US TO LINK TOGETHER TOAN' S AND 23 RD DIV CG CAM' S REMARKS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH DCM ON JUNE 23 (PARA 2 AND 3, REFTEL). TOAN WAS EVIDENTLY TALKING ABOUT PART (A) OF THE ULTIMATUM, AND IT WAS IN THIS
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CONNECTION THAT HE SAID HE WOULD BOMB BEN HET (KONTUM PROVINCE) AND DUC CO (PLEIKU PROVINCE) IF NVA DID NOT WITHDRAW FROM THE TWO VILLAGES WITHIN TIME LIMIT. CAM, ON THE OTHER HAND, MUST HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT PART (B) OF THE ULTIMATUM WHEN HE REFERRED TO BOMBING OF BEN HET AND OF PHUNG HOANG 2 (ALSO IN KONTUM PROVINCE) IN RETALIATION FOR ANY FUTURE ENEMY ACTION DIRECTED AGAINST KONTUM CITY ITSELF. (GEN. TOAN DID NOT RPT NOT MENTION PHUNG HOANG/ DAK TO, WHEREAS GEN. CAM DID NOT MENTION DUC CO; THE ONE POSSIBLE TARGET MENTIONED BY BOTH WAS BEN HET.) AS STATED REFTEL, ICCS HAS NO ONE IN DUC CO, BUT THREE DELEGATIONS ARE PRESENT IN BEN HET, THE INDONESIANS HAVING PULLED OUT SOME TIME AGO.

4. TO POLOFF' S KNOWLEDGE, LAST ABF IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF KONTUM CITY OCCURRED ON JUNE 20, WHEN SEVERAL ROUNDS FELL WITHIN ABOUT TWO KM OF CENTER OF TOWN BUT CAUSED NO CASUALTIES OR SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE.

5. SENIOR CANDEL IN KONTUM LEFT FOR PLEIKU MORNING OF JUNE 24 TO DELIVER TEXT OF ULTIMATUM TO REGION III CANDEL CHIEF, COL. MCGREGOR. HOWEVER, POLOFF BELIEVES MCGREGOR WAS INFORMED OF CONTENT, AT LEAST IN GENERAL GERMS, ON JUNE 23 AND PROBABLY ADVISED HIS HQ IN SAIGON AT ONCE . POLOFF HAS NO READING SO FAR ON ICCS REACTION OR INTENTIONS BUT EXPECTS TO SEE KONTUM CANDEL LATE TODAY UPON LATTER' S RETURN FROM PLEIKU. WILL REPORT ANYTHING NEW RESULTING FROM THAT CONVERSATION.

6. CONCERNING GVN EFFORT TO RETAKE TRUNG NGHIA, POLOFF REPORTS THAT, AS OF MORNING JUNE 24, 1 ST BN, 44 TH REGT APPEARS TO BE 300 TO 500 METERS INSIDE EASTERN LIMITS OF TRUNG NGHIA VILLAGE ITSELF BUT IS ENCOUNTERING DETERMINED RESISTANCE. BATTALIONS OF 45 TH REGT APPROACHING FROM NORTH AND FROM SOUTHEAST ARE CLOSE TO THE VILLAGE BUT ARE ALSO MEETING RESISTANCE; BATTALION ON THE NORTH WAS REINFORCED JUNE 23 BY UNSPECIFIED UNITS FROM THE DAK ROCOT AREA. POLOFF EXPECTS VNAF STRIKES ON ENEMY POSITIONS IN TRUNG NGHIA AGAIN TODAY SINCE WEATHER EVEN IN MORNING WAS REASONABLY GOOD. IN SUM, ARVN UNITS IN LAST 24 HOURS HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS BUT AT COST OF MODERATE CASUALTIES RESULTING FROM FREQUENT CONTACTS AND NUMEROUS ENEMY ABF' S. SIGNED TEARE UNQUOTE

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